

## wherever you need me by caffeinescripts

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** & i really hope jonathan's motivation makes sense, F/M, a girl with daddy issues writing about her favorite characters daddy issues hmm, my heart broke & healed itself while writing this so i hope reading is a similar experience, not so much angst but its their first real fight so its heavy, very background stonathan friendship though!!

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Jonathan Byers, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2018-01-29

**Updated:** 2018-01-29

**Packaged:** 2022-04-20 16:33:24

**Rating:** Not Rated

**Warnings:** Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 3,579

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

She wasn't, really, mad. Well, she was. But more than that she just wanted to know what was going on. For the first time in six months she didn't have a ride to school, or someone to eat (or not eat) lunch with in his car or in the dark room. He hadn't snuck in her window, not that he normally did Wednesday's, but he hadn't even called. And she'd be damned if she reached out first.

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### Author's Note:

for the anon on tumblr that requested: jonathan & nancy's first argument, this is for you. feel free to check out my tumblr & request fics @ nancyswhlr.tumblr.com :)

oh, as always, dedicated to jackie & geena. at least i know someone will read this <3

She wasn't mad. Well, she was, but more than that she just wanted to know what was going on. For the first time in six months she didn't have a ride to school, or someone to eat (or not eat) lunch with in his car or in the dark room. He hadn't snuck in her window, not that he normally did Wednesday's, but he hadn't even called. And she'd be damned if she reached out first.

They lasted two days. Two days of borrowing her mom's car to get to school. The first day she was met with natural interrogating.

"Sure sweetie, is Jonathan feeling alright?" Her mother asked, somewhat worried, when she'd asked.

"I don't know." Nancy quipped, hoping her mom would just drop it. "Probably."

She didn't. "Is everything okay?"

"Everything's fine." She shot back, grabbing her bag and beelining to the door, not wanting to be pressed further.

"We have to wait for Lucas." Mike was at her heels, following her out the door. She hadn't said she'd drive them, but she couldn't care less right now.

"Whatever." She locked it behind her.

"So," He followed her to the car. "What're you and Jonathan fighting about?"

Nancy stopped in her tracks. “We’re not-” Cutting herself off, because that wasn’t exactly true. But they’d never fought like this before. She shook her head. “You want the ride or not?”

Mike nodded, wearing a look that promised he’d back off. Lucas was 5 minutes late and she hit every red light because she sucked at timing but most of all she missed her boyfriend’s mixtape filling up the car mixing with the boys chatter. And his hand normally finding hers somewhere halfway through the ride. It didn’t make every day a great one, but it at least felt like something she could face when she had him by her side.

She wondered where she should eat lunch through half of her classes. They had English together, but it had gone by without a hitch. She already knew he’d be in the darkroom, developing some photos he’d taken last week that she begrudgingly really wanted to see. She stopped wondering when Steve leaned against her locker, almost hopeful.

“Where’s your other half?” He joked.

Nancy shrugged. “Don’t know.” She focused her attention on swapping books.

“Is everything okay?” He echoed her mother’s concern, only irritating Nancy further.

She licked her lips. “Never better. Can’t you tell?”

Steve nodded, letting the awkwardness only hang in the air for a moment. “Need someone to eat lunch with?”

She looked up, grateful they’d remained friends. Not just for this, but she’d heard a rumor a couple months back he wasn’t over her. But word around school was he was going out with Kelly from calc now, so she was pretty sure that was just that. She ended up asking him about it at the cafeteria table they shared, trying to ignore how weird it was to not have Jonathan by her side and across from him. It just felt...off. Like he was missing.

Her gratitude about him not pressing her about the fight only lasted a

day. Thursday he'd chosen to check on Jonathan and she knew it, resulting in her either trying to spark up a painfully awkward conversation with Allie, who'd definitely ask, or eat alone in the car. Her annoyance died and a little guilt welled up inside her when she realized this is what Steve had to do when they didn't have lunch with him.

Friday morning rolled around painfully slow.

"Hey Nance, can you swing by and get Dustin?" Mike asked casually, halfway to the car.

She whipped around to look at him like he was insane, or had grown two heads or something. "Absolutely not."

"Common! Why not?!"

"Because we'll be late. And I know you guys, that means I'll have to get Max too. What happened to Steve?" Dustin and Max's regular ride as of lately because those two lived closer.

Mike shrugged. "He told Dustin he was skipping."

Nancy groaned, outwardly, cursing the fact he was a senior that didn't have to care about attendance anymore. They ended up 20 minutes late and Max had to sit on Lucas' lap. She ignored the racing of her heart when she power-walked through the parking lot, talking notice that her boyfriend's car was nowhere to be found.

She didn't worry until 3rd period. Considering he wasn't even late, he was not going to show up. He's probably just skipping, she told herself. Even though he didn't really skip, unless she was involved with it. Or worse, his family needed him to. She practically ran to Steve at first sight of him in the hallway.

"Hey Nancy." He looked sheepish.

"Hey. Want to tell me why I was the soccer mom this morning?" She raised an accusatory eyebrow at him, trying distract herself from Jonathan. She didn't have a reason to worry, she told herself. They'd tell her if something happened, for sure. No way would Mike and the rest of them been arguing over the rules of rock, paper, scissors when

playing with El this morning if there was something wrong.

"I had to, ah, take care of something."

She called bullshit. "And what was that?" She looked at him expectantly, only more frustrated when he stumbled to answer. "Is it something about Jonathan?" She asked quickly, more worried than she wanted to sound.

She must've looked as nervous as she felt because Steve placed a hand on her shoulder. "Relax, he's fine. He just didn't want to talk yesterday and Dustin told me about what Will told him and-"

"Wait, what?" She demanded, cutting him off. "What's going on with him?"

"You should really go talk to him, Nance." She recognized the look on his face. Whatever it was, it wasn't his place to say.

"No way. He's the one that started this."

"This?"

"Yes! This!" She said, exasperatedly. "This weird fight thing we've never had before!"

Steve, somehow, softened. "Don't you want to know why?" She looked at him, confused. "Why he acted weird, causing this fight of yours?"

Nancy frowned, it never occurred to her that something had been wrong. She was quiet for a moment, absorbing what he was saying. Of course she wanted to know. She should've known there was something was bothering him, that he always took everything on his own. "Is he okay?" She settled on, after a moment.

"Go talk to him." Steve said, sincerely. "Seriously, he needs you to." She ignored the thumping of her heart at that. "You do too. It's been, like, two days and you're both miserable."

Nancy bit her lip, making up her mind. "Thank you." She said gratefully. Steve only nodded as she walked away.

“Don’t worry!” He shouted after her. “I’ll give the kids a ride home!”

She didn’t get nervous again until she was in their driveway, the entire car ride was only filled with worry and confusion. Why didn’t he come to her with whatever this was?

Biting down her anxiousness, because Nancy Wheeler doesn’t retreat anymore, she strode up to the door. She knocked, hesitantly, as she willed her hands to not shake. Whatever she was expecting, it wasn’t Will opening the door.

“Oh, hey Nancy.” He seemed friendly, but tentative. He knew something was up with them, but of course he did.

“Hey.” She breathed out. “What’re you, uh, doing home so early?”

Will shrugged. “Jonathan said I could skip with him if I wanted.” Nancy nodded, he was Will’s ride to school.

“Did he offer or did you ask him a million times?” She teased gently.

“Okay! Fine!” The younger boy caved almost instantly. “But I had to stay! Have you seen what I’m working on?!” He defended himself, going to find a drawing he insisted would take forever to finish. She just laughed as he explained briefly, it wasn’t the worst thing in the world for the Byers’ to get a day off. “Jonathan’s in his room.” Will said after a moment, putting the drawing down. A look on his face that held more than more wisdom than someone his age should have.

“Thanks. Good luck with the drawing.” She offered gratefully, taking the same route she could do blindfolded to Jonathan’s room. She knocked softly, wondering if he was listening to music. “Jonathan?”

He was just taking off his headphones when she turned the doorknob. He looked up, clearly not expecting her by the look on his face. “Oh. Hey.”

“Hey.” She greeted him. It was silent for a moment as she shifted her weight between her feet, hating how she felt in his room right now. Like she didn’t belong. Like she didn’t slip off her shoes and climb onto his mattress with him a week ago.

“What’re you doing here?” He rose to stand with her.

Nancy faltered, that was curveball. And something she should’ve figured out before she knocked. What was she doing here? She didn’t have an answer. ‘Steve told me to come’ didn’t sound right, it didn’t express how much she worried about him. But she was still walking on eggshells here. “Can we talk?” She settled on instead of answering.

Jonathan nodded. “Yeah, yeah.” He wouldn’t meet her eyes. They both stood there, silently, for another minute.

“Well, what happened?” She started. “On Wednesday?”

Jonathan shrugged. “I don’t know.”

“Yeah, you do. Jonathan you’re the one-” She was saying, fully prepared to go on about how he’d been the one to start the disagreement.

“I get it.” He cut her off, for once. She was thoroughly surprised. “I was a dick to you but Nancy...” He trailed off, angering her even more.

“But Nancy what?!” She demanded.

Jonathan shook his head. “Nevermind,” He mumbled.

“No, say it. What were you going to say?” She pushed, standing a little straighter.

“Maybe you just deserve better.” She could tell he said it without thinking the words through. But what he was saying mixed with the tone of his voice, actually fighting with *her* , felt like she’d been slapped in the face. “I’ve just been thinking the past-”

“No. You do not get to do this.” She stopped him. “Not to yourself. Not to me.” She squared her shoulders, ignoring the tug at her heart. She knew he was somewhat insecure but not like this.

“I’m serious Nancy.” He stood a little straighter too.

"I am too." She didn't know what was going on with him, but she was not about to back down. She'd figure this out if it killed her, a new frustration seeming to come out of nowhere. "I get it, you're dealing with something but you don't have to alone." She wanted him to know she was here for him. She was also vaguely aware of the phone ringing in the other room, but they both ignored it.

"Wait? How do you even know? Nancy-" He tried.

"No. Forget about that.." She was still determined, inching closer to him as she spoke. She hoped she looked as determined and exasperated as she felt. "You can't do this! You can't just shut me out!"

Before she could say anymore, or he could respond, there was a soft knock at the door. Both whipped to look at it, painfully aware of Will being home again. And he'd probably heard everything. He looked concerned in the doorway, and a little guilty for intruding. "Hey, Jonathan..." He looked warily at him.

Jonathan sighed. "Yeah, what's up buddy?"

Will looked nervously between the two of them. "It's, uh...dad on the phone." he paused, as if considering which would be weirder to call him between "dad" or "Lonnie". "He wants to know if you've decided on coming, he wants to talk to you..."

Whatever anger Nancy had felt in the past few moments had quickly redirected itself to Jonathan's piece of shit father. And the audacity he had to call asking for him. She felt defensive already, a protectiveness over Jonathan (and Will) taking over whatever anger she'd felt towards her boyfriend. Before Jonathan could even respond, Nancy was. "I'll talk to him." She said, angry and protective while Will's eyes widened.

She was already about to march over to that phone and give Lonnie Byers' a piece of her mind before something stopped her, physically. Jonathan had caught her wrist, freezing her in place. This was the first time he'd touched her since she got here. Hell, in days, as they were painfully reminded by the warmth they felt, that she had missed.



“Just tell him I’m busy. Okay?” Jonathan requested of his little brother, who nodded before closing the door again. Within a moment, Nancy was turning to face him.

He knew the look in her eye like the back of his hand. “Why is your dad calling? Asking for you?”

He hadn’t let go of her wrist, not like she wasn’t leaning into the touch subconsciously. Until he did, sighing as he went to sit on the bed. She followed him as if she was attached. “I-” He stammered. “He wants me to come over for dinner.” He said, as if that explained anything.

Nancy sat next to him without thinking twice. “Why?” She was stunned, the back of her mind putting two and two together though. Will had told Dustin, who had told Steve. At least that made sense.

Jonathan shrugged, but was quickly met with her “don’t give me any bullshit” look. “He, uh, called a week ago or something. Said he wanted me to come over and go to dinner.

“Why though?” She repeated herself, in disbelief, demanding more of an explanation.

In the year and half she actively knew Jonathan, Lonnie had been a ghost. The last time she even saw him was at Will’s fake funeral. Apparently he came to the hospital once when Will was found alive, but wanted nothing to do with them or the doctor’s appointments for the kid after that. Not that Joyce wanted him involved. She’d guess he didn’t even know about Will’s deadly case of the flu he caught in the fall.

Jonathan sighed, “I don’t know. He said something about wanting to reconnect before my senior year and I go away or whatever...It doesn’t matter.” He trailed off, but Nancy softened.

She was quiet for a moment, knowing exactly how he’d respond to her next question. But it was the only way she’d move forward. “Well, do you want to?” She tried to ask gently, let it be known she wasn’t angry or condescending anymore. He only looked at her confused. “Do you want to go to the dinner?” She clarified.

“What? No!” He responded exactly like she expected. “Never! That guy is-”

“Your dad.” She cut him off. “He’s a terrible person.” She reassured him when she saw the weird look of disbelief on his face now. “But he’s still your dad. You know, it’s not...” She paused, trying to think of how to phrase this. “...wrong to want to have a father figure in your life.”

“He tried to use Will’s death as a way to get money from an insurance claim! He never gave a damn about Will, or his childhood, or mine. He hurt my mom, he-” Jonathan started, Nancy nodded as he ranted, as if she didn’t know all of this.

“Left.” She supplied, stopping him again. “He left.” Cautiously, she touched his arm, grateful he didn’t pull away. “Ever since then you’ve had trust issues, and this feeling like you’re not good enough for anyone. All of your problems come from this one douche that wants to waltz back in your life like nothing happened. Right?” She was looking him intently in the eyes now, he nodded numbly back at her. “But he’s your dad. And you cannot beat yourself up over wanting to have a relationship with him. Even if it’s just for closure. Or, with any kind of father figure. ” She spoke, gentle determination in her words.

Jonathan was once again floored at how unbelievably wise yet compassionate she was. She was strong and brave but she was still the same girl that said something to him at school when Will went missing, and no one else did. The same girl that forgave him for the photographs he regretted taking to this day.

He loved her. “Nancy.”

“It’s okay.” She shrugged. “It’s okay to feel that way. Don’t get me wrong, I’d punch your dad in the face first chance I get.” He couldn’t help the chuckle she got from him. “But you can’t help feeling like that. Wanting that, regardless if you should.” Slowly, carefully, she moved her hand from his arm to his own. He gently helped her interlock them. “But, you can’t shut people out when you’re dealing with this kind of stuff, okay?”

Jonathan hung his head, already feeling guilt for lashing out and for shutting out the one person in the world that meant most to him alongside his family. Feeling guilt because she had understood perfectly in a minute feelings he'd been struggling with all week. That he'd let that asshole impact his life and screw everything up yet again, that he's ruined things all the way from Indianapolis. That Jonathan let him get in the way of Nancy, who was everything to him. She should be angry, he would be. But he could tell by the soft look in her eyes she wasn't going to hold him to anything he said.

"I love you." Was all he managed to get out.

He'd never get tired looking in her eyes, but *that* look she got when he said it was something else entirely. The way her eyes widened before she could stop the grin spreading on her face. Before he could react, she was leaning into him. The kiss was soft, but held 3 days worth of missed passion. "I love you." She broke away to look in his eyes, feeling nervous. He let his stomach clench, knowing how wary she was with using those words. She was so nervous to say it after she hadn't truly loved her ex, that they barely said it now. He kind of liked that though, it meant more when they did.

She was back on his lips in an instant, kissing him excitedly with a smile on both their faces that made it difficult. Eventually, they pulled away, when the TV got a little louder in the next room. Nancy let out a sigh of contentment.

"I'm sorry." He spoke up again, still looking her in the eye since she hadn't moved from his embrace. "I should've talked to you or something..."

"Next time." She shrugged, letting her hands run through the hair at the base of his neck. "You're gonna get over your trust issues."

"Yeah?"

"Definitely." She kissed him again. He knew it too. There already wasn't anyone else in the world he trusted more than her, so that was a start.

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“Can I ask you something?” Jonathan spoke up somewhat seriously, a couple weeks later. Moving to get up from lounging on her bed as she only turned, putting down the dress she’d been holding up. She had to look nice for graduation, she knew that much, but so far had no idea what to wear.

“Of course.” She moved to sit next to him. “What’s up?”

He looked nervous, causing butterflies and worry in Nancy’s stomach. “I, uh, thought about what you said. You’re right, as always.” He laughed a little, causing Nancy to smile too as her scarred hand found his. “I think it would be a good idea to get some closure, with my dad. I never want to see him again but I can’t go on like this, with this weird power over me. It’s like he...”

“He wins?” She supplied after a moment, Jonathan nodding. “So you’re going to go to dinner then?” She asked gently, trying to ignore the small part of her that was inexplicably happy he was opening up to her, that his trust issues be damned.

“Yeah.” He nodded, looking down at their intertwined hands. “And I was hoping you’d come with me?” He asked nervously. She was almost stunned again, but at the same time honored. “There’s no way I can do it alone, Nancy, and there’s no one else I’d want or trust to go with me.”

She nodded, trying to wipe the look of surprise off her face. “Of course. I even promise not to punch him when I first see him. Well, maybe.” She joked, causing him to laugh. She tried to hide hers as she squeezed his hand. “Seriously though.” She looked him in the eye after the laughter died down from the two of them. “If you need me there, I’m there. We’re a team, remember?” She prompted a small smile off of him, and she returned it.

“You sure? I don’t want you to feel like you have to.”

Nancy shook her head. “I want to be wherever you need me.”

Jonathan only smiled, pressing his lips against hers sweetly. "Sorry," he said after a rather short makeout session considering they were both still sitting. "I'm keeping you from choosing an outfit."

She shrugged. "It's Steve's graduation, who cares what I'm wearing?"

"You'll look beautiful in anything." He was saying, lips already back on hers.

**Author's Note:**

P.S. i really meant to throw in hopper being like a father figure to jonathan (& will) somewhere in here but it didn't really fit? who knows, maybe in a part 2 or something, but know that was my intention.